

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01  
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02  
SS-15 USIA-06 /071 W  
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AMCONSUL HONG KONG  
USLO PEKING

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3.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: PINT, JA  
SUBJECT: POLITICIANS NEW YEAR'S INTERVIEWS

REF: TOKYO 0038

1. JAPANESE PAPERS CARRIED LARGE NUMBER OF NEW YEAR'S  
INTERVIEWS WITH MAJOR POLITICIANS. REFTEL REPORTED THAT  
OF PRIMIN FUKUDA; SUMMARIZED BELOW ARE SALIENT POINTS MADE  
BY VARIOUS OPPOSITION LEADERS.

2. NEW JAPAN SOCIALIST PARTY (JSP) CHAIRMAN ASUKATA  
THOUGHT THAT BECAUSE PRIMIN FUKUDA'S ANTI-RECESSIONARY  
POLICIES HAD REACHED STANDSTILL, HE WOULD BE FORCED TO  
CALL LOWER HOUSE ELECTION LATE THIS YEAR. OPINION POLLS  
TO CONTRARY, HE SAID JSP WOULD DO WELL IN FALL ELECTIONS  
BECAUSE OF INVIGORATION IT WOULD RECEIVE FROM HIS NEW  
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PEOPLE-ORIENTED POLICIES. WONDERING HOW FUKUDA EVER  
CAME UP WITH PREDICTION OF 7 PERCENT GNP GROWTH IN  
1978, ASUKATA SAID HAPAN'S APPROACH TO ECONOMIC  
PROBLEMS SHOULD BE FOCUSED NOT ON INTERNATIONAL ASPECTS,  
BUT ON PEOPLES' LIVELIHOOD: "WE OUGHT TO GET RID OF  
IDEA THAT OUR POLICIES ARE GOOD IF AMERICA IS SATISFIED  
WITH THEM."

3. IN CONTRAST, KOMEITO (CGP) CHAIRMAN TAKEIRI, SIGNALLING GENERALLY COOPERATIVE ATTITUDE EXHIBITED IN DIET LAST YEAR, SAID HIS PARTY WOULD DO UTMOST TO HELP IMPROVE DOMESTIC ECONOMY BY SHARING RESPONSIBILITY WITH LDP. HE PROPOSED TAX CUTS, WELFARE INCREASES AND WAGE HIKES AS MEANS OF REACHING 7 PERCENT GROWTH TARGET. IN SURPRISING MANIFESTATION OF KOMEITO'S DESIRE TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF ITS SWING VOTE WHILE STILL TOUTING ITSELF AS POTENTIAL LEADER OF OPPOSITION COALITION, TAKEIRI SAID HE HOPED CGP COULD JOIN SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL, BUT DID NOT EXPLAIN HOW HIS PARTY'S POLICIES QUALIFIED IT AS SOCIALIST.

4. IN NEW YEAR'S INTERVIEW CARRIED BY COMMUNIST ORGAN AKAHATA, JCP CHAIRMAN KENJI MIYAMOTO SAID HE WOULD VISIT ROMANIA, YUGOSLAVIA AND FRANCE THIS YEAR PERHAPS IN MAY, LATTER VISIT PRESUMABLY RETURNING THAT OF MARCHAIS WHO VISITED JAPAN IN 1976. MIYAMOTO APPARENTLY WANTS TO REFURBISH HIS IMAGE AS LEADER OF PARTY WHICH, IN EURO-COMMUNIST STYLE IS INDEPENDENT-MINDED AND NATIONALISTIC.

5. IN JAPAN TIMES INTERVIEW, CHAIRMAN YOHEI KONO OF NEW LIBERAL CLUB (NLC) QUOTED AS SAYING "PRIME MINISTER WHO CONTINUES TO MAKE WRONG ECONOMIC POLICIES LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FOR NEARLY 20 MONTHS SHOULD BE REPLACED ... BUT CHANCES FUKUDA WILL STEP DOWN (THIS YEAR) ARE (ONLY) 50-50." HIDEO DEN, BREAKAWAY SOCIALIST, IN TURN, SAID IT WAS POSSIBLE FUKUDA WOULD BE FORCED TO RESIGN DURING 1978 TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR FAILURE OF HIS ECONOMIC MEASURES WHICH "ALWAYS COME TOO LATE." DEN ALSO ANNOUNCED IN SECOND INTERVIEW THAT PREPARATORY MEETING FOR INAUGURATION OF NEW PARTY, WITH HIMSELF AS CHAIRMAN AND SATSUKI EDA AS VICE CHAIRMAN WOULD TAKE PLACE JAN 22. DEN SAID HIS PARTY, "BORN OUT OF NECESSITY OF TIMES," SOULD START WITH SIX DIETMEN "JUST AS NLC HAD."

6. COMMENT: MOST OPPOSITION PARTY LEADERS (WE NOTICED NO DSP INTERVIEWS) FOUND FAIR GAME IN PRIME MINISTER'S ECONOMIC POLICIES, BUT TRUE TO FORM JSP AND JCP IN PARTICULAR OFFERED LITTLE IN WAY OF CONSTRUCTIVE ALTERNATIVES. DILEMMA OF MIDDLE-ROAD CGP NLC AND BREAKAWAY SOCIALISTS, IN TURN, IS HOW TO APPEAR CONSTRUCTIVE AND NEW AND DIFFERENT AT SAME TIME. MANSFIELD

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 jan 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** PRESS COMMENTS, POLITICAL LEADERS  
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**Draft Date:** 04 jan 1978  
**Decaption Date:** 01 jan 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1978TOKYO00089  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** N/A  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Expiration:**  
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**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
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**Review Release Event:** n/a  
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**Review Markings:**  
Sheryl P. Walter  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
20 Mar 2014  
**Markings:** Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014